

## Guide to Flexible Work Technology Tools

The following information will help you determine the most effective technology tools to fulfill your telework responsibilities. Review the options with your supervisor, and use the [Technology Tools Checklist](#) to assure that you have the resources to perform your work.

### COSTS

Your department may subsidize your Telework costs may if your supervision deems the costs necessary and if your department has a budget for those costs. Your supervisor has final authority to authorize telework and costs. Your [Telework/Remote Work Agreement](#) specifies who supplies and/or pays for your telework technology tools. If you are eligible for department subsidized technology tools, the [Overview of Technology Tools](#) will help your determine what technology is available and the approximate costs of the options. Contact your [Telecom Coordinator](#) for specific costs or contact commercial service providers directly.

### VOICE COMMUNICATIONS LINES

A voice communications line enables you to communicate verbally with others while teleworking. Some lines provide only voice communications, while others allow you to access and transmit data as well. You and your supervisor will determine the best option available and decide whether you or your department will pay for this service.

If you are eligible for department subsidized technology tools, click here to determine approximate option costs. Contact your [Telecom Coordinator](#) for specific costs or contact commercial service providers directly.

- a. **Mason Telecommunications Land Line:** A Mason-provided verbal communications line via a physical connection between two or more land line telephones. If your supervisor has agreed to provide a Mason telecommunications land line, consult your [Telecom Coordinator](#) for assistance in requesting Mason technology services.
- b. **Voice Land Line:** A verbal communications line via a physical connection between two or more land line telephones. Some of the carriers that provide land lines include AT&T, Verizon, Qwest/Century Link, and Vonage.
- c. **Mason Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Line:** A Mason-provided communications line (verbal and visual or just verbal) over the Internet that can be used with a computer, mobile phone, or land line phone. If your supervisor has agreed to provide a VoIP line, consult your [Telecom Coordinator](#) for assistance in requesting Mason technology services.

- d. **Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Line:** Commercially provided communications line (verbal and visual or just verbal) over the Internet that can be used with a computer, mobile phone, or land line phone. If your supervisor has agreed to provide a VoIP line, consult your [Telecom Coordinator](#) for assistance in requesting Mason technology services.

## **INTERNET CONNECTIVITY**

The internet provides access to e-mail and other necessary telework resources. All teleworkers need internet connectivity, and most workers already have internet at the alternate work location. In some situations internet may be provided or partially subsidized. You and your supervisor will determine the best internet option required for the work to be performed and decide whether you or your department will pay for this service.

If you are eligible for department subsidized technology tools, click here to determine approximate option costs. Contact your [Telecom Coordinator](#) for specific costs or contact commercial service providers directly.

- a. **Internet:** Internet access provided through cable. Cable Internet requires a cable Internet subscription from a provider. Carriers that deliver Internet cable include Comcast, Cox Communications, RCN, and Time Warner.
- b. **FiOS:** Internet access provided through fiber-optic networks. FIOS Internet service requires a subscription to Verizon FiOS Internet service.
- c. **Satellite:** Internet access provided through satellites orbiting the Earth. Satellite service requires a satellite Internet subscription from an Internet satellite service provider and a satellite dish. Carriers that provide satellite Internet service are DIRECTV, Dish Network, HughesNet, and Wildblue.
- d. **Air Card/MiFi for Cellular Networks:** AirCards are a type of small wireless broadband modem that connects a variety of devices and provides access to the Internet via a cellular phone network. MiFi is a line of compact broadband wireless routers produced by Novatel Wireless that have the same general characteristics as AirCards. AirCard/MiFi service requires an AirCard/MiFi modem device and a subscription from a cellular service provider. In order to use this service, you must have a device with the wireless connectivity that is appropriate for conducting your teleworking duties. Carriers providing AirCard/MiFi service include AT&T, Verizon, and Sprint.
- e. **Modem Card:** Modem cards provide Internet access via a device that is either internally attached to a PC's motherboard or externally attached to a PC or laptop using a USB connection. An internal PC card requires wired connectivity from an Internet provider; a wireless card with a USB connection requires wireless access to an Internet provider.

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## **COMPUTER/LAPTOP/TABLET DEVICES**

Laptop/notebook computers are portable and can be used in many locations. In some telework arrangements, Mason provides a laptop to the employee to conduct work on behalf of the university. A variety of hardware options are available to assist you in performing your teleworking duties, including desktop computers, laptops, and tablet devices. You and your supervisor will determine the best option available and decide whether you or your department will pay for this device. Many factors influence the decision, including how necessary the device is for effective teleworking and whether your department has a budget for the cost.

If you are eligible for department subsidized technology tools, click here to determine approximate option costs. Contact your [Telecom Coordinator](#) for specific costs or contact commercial service providers directly.

- a. **Mason Laptop:** A Mason Laptop is a laptop computer Mason provides to a worker so that the worker can perform work on Mason's behalf.
- b. **Mason Desktop PC:** A desktop PC is a complete computer designed for use by one person at a time. In some telework arrangements, Mason provides a desktop PC to the employee to conduct work on behalf of the university.
- c. **Mason Tablet:** A tablet device is a wireless, portable computer with a touch screen interface. In some telework arrangements, Mason provides a tablet device to the employee to conduct work on behalf of the university.
- d. **Employee-Provided Laptop:** Some telework arrangements require the employee to provide their own laptop/notebook computer.
- e. **Employee-Provided Desktop Personal Computer (PC):** Some telework arrangements require the employee to provide their own desktop PC.
- f. **Employee-Provided Tablet Device:** Some telework arrangements require the employee to provide their own tablet device.

To help determine which option is best for you, complete the [How Do I Choose a Computer for Telework](#) questionnaire. For further assistance, the Technology Systems Division has detailed information on [Recommended Computer Systems for Faculty and Staff](#) in the [IT Services Catalog](#).

## **SOFTWARE FOR ACCESS TO ONLINE SYSTEMS AND SERVICES**

If your teleworking duties require access to applications and systems on the Mason network, you and your supervisor will determine the best option available. Most options are provided by Mason free of charge.

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- a. **Virtual Private Network (VPN):** Allows secure remote access to Mason's resources and your office computer so that you can perform work as if you were in the office. VPN is the recommended method of access. Additional information is available from the [VPN FAQ](#) web page.
- b. **Unified Communications:** Allows you to receive faxes via e-mail and voice messages attached to e-mails as audio files.
- c. **Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP):** Allows Microsoft Operating Systems to communicate with a Windows-based terminal server across the network.
- d. **PC Anywhere:** Software that enables remote desktop and remote access on a device. It requires purchase of a license from Symantec.

### **VOICE COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES AND SERVICE PLANS**

Most Mason employees already have a communication device and service plan at the alternate work location. In some situations, devices and associated plans may be provided by the department. There are several types of devices and service plans for voice communications. You and your supervisor will determine the best option available and decide whether you or your department will pay for the device and service.

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- a. **Desk Set:** A land line telephone used in conjunction with land line service. Land line telephones can be obtained from most businesses that sell electronics and telephone equipment.
- b. **Cellular:** A mobile telephone that allows calls to be placed over a wide geographic range. There are many carriers to choose from including Cricket, Verizon Wireless, AT&T, T-Mobile, and Sprint.
- c. **Smartphone:** A cellular phone that combines features of a variety of devices, including a personal digital assistant, portable media player, camera, computer, and many others. There are many carriers to choose from including Cricket, Verizon Wireless, AT&T, T-Mobile, and Sprint.
- d. **Softphone:** A Softphone is an application that enables a computer to be used as a telephone using VoIP. A soft phone is recommended as part of the [Telework Technology Service Bundle](#). If your supervisor has agreed to provide the Bundle,

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### **OTHER HARDWARE/SUPPLIES**

Depending on your technology equipment, additional components may be necessary. You and your supervisor will determine the best options available and decide whether you or your department will pay for these components.

If you are eligible for department subsidized technology tools, click here to determine approximate option costs. Contact your [Telecom Coordinator](#) for specific costs or contact commercial service providers directly.

- a. **Headset:** An attachment that holds an earphone or pair of earphones and a voice transmitter at one's head. Headsets appropriate for use with computing devices usually have a USB connector or multi-pronged plug that connects to the device's speaker and audio jacks. A headset can be obtained from most businesses that sell electronics and telephone equipment.
- b. **Keyboard:** An input device consisting of buttons that correspond to written symbols that can be obtained from most businesses that sell electronics and computer equipment.
- c. **Monitor:** An electronic visual display for computers that can be obtained from most businesses that sell electronics and computer equipment.
- d. **Mouse:** A pointing device whose movement controls the motion of a cursor on a monitor. A mouse can be obtained from most businesses that sell electronics and computer equipment.
- e. **Miscellaneous (mouse pad, speakers, cooling device, paper, etc.):** Effective teleworking may require the purchase of a variety of incidentals related to technology devices, services, operation, and maintenance. Costs for such items vary. Review your needs and discuss procurement with your supervisor.

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